Shelving of Cellular Telephones

*17. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of shelving the Cellular Telephone proposal; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Foreign investment in power sector

*18. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1343 gievn in the Rajya Sabha on 1st December, 1992 and state:

(a) whether Government are considering the possibilty of giving sovereign guarantee to foreign investors in the power sector;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is the number of applications of foreign investors that have been cleared by Government, so far?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI N. K. P. SALVE): (a) and (b) The Government of India will consider extending a counter guarantee for the payment obligations of the State Electricity Boards to the private power companies on the specific request of the concerned State Governments.

(c) Three proposals have been cleared from the foreign investment angle.

Review of Central Excise and Customs Act

*19. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Federation of Indian Exports Organization has urged Government to review Central Excise and Customs laws; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the suggestions made and what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) The Federation of Indian Export Organizations has submitted a Pre-Budget Memorandum on 1.2.93 suggesting, inter alia, rationalisation of duty structure. This being mostly a budgetary matter, it will not be appropriate to indicate Government's reaction to their proposals.

Duty concessions to paper industry

*20. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether indigenous paper makers have been saddled with more levies than foreign units;

(b) if so, the details of the levies on indigenous and foreign units; and

(c) what steps being contemplated by Govt. in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) In the levy of excise duty on paper no distinction is made on the basis whether it is manufactured by an indigenous unit or others. Ths is so in respect of levy of import duty also.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Facilities at Vaishno Devi

21. SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of pilgrims who visited Vaishno Devi (Jammu and Kashmir) for darshan from October, 1992 to January, 1993 and how much